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## College of Behavioral and Social Sciences News

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# Georgia Southern students show True Blue spirit to aid abused, neglected children

September 9, 2014



April Schueths, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Georgia Southern University and has served on the board of directors for the Court Appointed Special Advocates of the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit since 2011.

"I worked for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in child protective services after I completed my undergraduate degree," Schueths said. "I had a CASA on one of my challenging cases and saw how beneficial the program is. In Spring 2011, Lainie Jenkins, the CASA director for the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit, spoke to my Child Welfare course at Georgia Southern and asked me to join the organization's board. I'm a strong supporter of the program and family inequality is one of my teaching and research areas, so I accepted her invitation."

CASA is a national nonprofit organization that recruits, screens, trains and supervises community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children involved in Superior Court deprivation proceedings. CASA volunteers attend court on behalf of the children to which they are assigned to ensure that

the children's best interests are considered by the courts, social-service system and community-service providers. The children served by CASA have been removed from their homes because of parental abuse and/or neglect and, for many of these children, their CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives.

Schueths has been working hard this fall to educate students and colleagues on the importance of CASA and has spearheaded campus-wide participation in the upcoming CASA Superhero 5k Run, the organization's annual fundraising event. So far, students from the Sociological Society within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, the Justice Studies Club of the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, the Masters of Public Administration Student Association in the Institute for Public and Nonprofit Studies, and the School of Human Ecology have pledged their support for the November 1 event.

"In all of these disciplines, students are learning about the theoretical and empirical issues facing vulnerable children and families and the organizations that serve them," Schueths said. "They are also learning how to have a creative and positive impact on their local, state and national communities. The CASA 5K is an opportunity to directly and positively impact the lives of the people they study. Many of our students will go on to become leaders in social services and nonprofits, and these types of learning experiences will benefit them greatly."

The Ogeechee Judicial Circuit branch of CASA serves Bulloch, Effingham, Jenkins and Screven counties. The annual 5K run's theme contends that "Every child deserves a hero; abused and neglected children deserve Superheroes!" The November 1 event begins near the Caboose in downtown Guyton and includes both the 3.25-mile run and a one-mile fun run. Attendees may choose to dress as superheroes.

For more information about the Superhero run or to volunteer for the event, contact Shueths at [aschueths@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:aschueths@georgiasouthern.edu). For more information about CASA, contact executive director Lainie Jenkins at [joincasa@gmail.com](mailto:joincasa@gmail.com)

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